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More regulation of political speech through control of private money without addressing the subject of influential government only drives the money underground, further giving a select group an advantage over the honest candidate who only wants smaller government.

True, reform probably is not possible without changing the role of government, which now exists to regulate, tax, subsidize and show preferential treatment.

Only changing the nature of government will eliminate the motive for so many to invest so much in the political process, but we should not make a bad situation worse by passing more laws. We should demand disclosure so voters can decide if their representatives in Congress are duly influenced or unduly influenced, but the best thing we could do is to encourage competition, which will be made worse if the reformers have their way.

The majority of Americans are turned off with the system and do not vote because they do not believe they have a real choice. Signature requirements, filing fees and rules written by the two major parties make it virtually impossible for alternative parties to compete if not independently rich or a celebrity. We should change these obstructive rules to encourage the majority of Americans who now sit out the elections to participate in the electoral process.

Campaign finance reform is once again being painted as the solution to political corruption in Washington. Indeed, that is a problem, but today's reformers hardly offer a solution. The real problem is that government has too much influence over our economy and lives, creating a tremendous incentive to protect one's own interests by "investing" in politicians. The problem is not a lack of federal laws, or rules regulating campaign spending, therefore more laws won't help. We hardly suffer from too much freedom. Any effort to solve the campaign finance problem with more laws will only make things worse by further undermining the principles of liberty and private property ownership.

The reformers are sincere in their effort to curtail special interest influence on government, but his cannot be done while ignoring the control government has assumed over our lives and economy. Current reforms address only the symptoms while the root cause of the problem is ignored. Since reform efforts involve regulating political speech through control of political money, personal liberty is compromised. Tough enforcement of spending rules will merely drive the influence underground since the stakes are too high and much is to be gained by exerting influence over government—legal or not. The more open and legal campaign expenditures are,

with disclosure, the easier it is for voters to know who's buying influence from whom.

There's tremendous incentive for every special interest group to influence government. Every individual, bank or corporation that does business with government invests plenty in influencing government. Lobbyists spend over a hundred million dollars per month trying to influence Congress. Taxpayers dollars are endlessly spent by bureaucrats in their effort to convince Congress to protect their own empires. Government has tremendous influence over the economy, and financial markets through interest rate controls, contracts, regulations, loans, and grants. Corporations and others are "forced" to participate in the process out of greed as well as self defense—since that's the way the system works. Equalizing competition and balancing power such as between labor and business is a common practice. As long as this system remains in place, the incentive to buy influence will continue.

Many reformers recognize this and either like the system or believe that it's futile to bring about changes and argue that curtailing influence is the only option left even if it involves compromising political speech through regulating political money.

It's naive to believe stricter rules will make a difference. If enough honorable men and women served in Congress and resisted the temptation to be influenced by any special interest group, of course this whole discussion would be unnecessary. Because Members do yield to the pressure, the reformers believe that more rules regulating political speech will solve the problem.

The reformers argue that it's only the fault of those trying to influence government and not the fault of the Members who yield to the pressure or the system that generates the abuse. This allows Members of Congress to avoid assuming responsibility for their own acts and instead places the blame on those who exert pressure on Congress through the political process which is a basic right bestowed on all Americans. The reformer's argument is "stop us before we capitulate to the special interest groups."

Politicians unable to accept this responsibility clamor for a system that diminishes the need for politicians to *persuade* individuals and groups to donate money to their campaign. Instead of persuasion they endorse coercing taxpayers to finance campaigns. This only changes the special interest groups that control government policy. Instead of voluntary groups making their own decisions with their own money, politicians and bureaucrats dictate how political campaigns will be financed.

Not only will politicians and bureaucrats gain influence over elections, other nondeservers will benefit. Clearly, incumbents will greatly benefit by more controls over campaign spending—a benefit to which the reformers will never admit.

The quasi-two party system will become more entrenched by limiting the huge expenditures required to oust an incumbent. Alternative choices and third-party candidates will be further handicapped if all the reforms proposed are passed. They will never qualify for equal treatment since all campaign laws are written by Republicans and Democrats. The same will be true when it comes to divvying up taxpayer's money for elections.

The media becomes a big winner. Their influence grows as private money is regulated.

It becomes more difficult to refute media propaganda, both print and electronic, when directed against a candidate if funds are limited. Campaigns are more likely to reflect the conventional wisdom and candidates will strive to avoid media attacks by accommodating their views.

The wealthy gain a significant edge since it's clear candidates can spend unlimited personal funds in elections. This is a big boast for the independently wealthy candidates over the average challenger who needs to raise and spend large funds to compete.

Celebrities will gain even a greater benefit than they already enjoy. Celebrity status is money in the bank and by limiting the resources to counter-balance this advantage, works against the non-celebrity who might be an issue-oriented challenger.

This current reform effort ignores the legitimate and moral Political Action Committees that exist only for good reasons and do not ask for any special benefit from government. The immoral Political Action Committees that work only to rip-off the taxpayers by getting benefits from government may deserve our condemnation but not the heavy hand of government anxious to control this group along with all the others. The reformers see no difference between the two and are willing to violate all personal liberty. Since more regulating doesn't address the basic problem of influential government, now out of control, neither groups deserves more coercive government rules. All the rules in the world can't prevent Members from yielding to political pressure of the groups that donate to their campaigns. Regulation cannot instill character.

More regulation of political speech through control of private money, without addressing the subject of influential government only drives the money underground, further giving a select group an advantage over the honest candidate who only wants smaller government.

True reform probably is not possible without changing the role of government, which now exists to regulate, tax, subsidize, and show preferential treatment. Only changing the nature of government will eliminate the motive for so many to invest so much in the political process. But we should not make a bad situation worse by passing more bad laws.

We should demand disclosure so voters can decide if their Representatives in Congress are unduly influenced. But the best thing we could do is to encourage competition, which will be made worse if the reformers have their way. The majority of Americans are turned off with the system and don't vote because they don't believe they have a real choice. Signature requirements, filing fees, and rules written by the two major parties make it virtually impossible for alternative parties to compete if not independently rich or a celebrity. We should change these obstructive rules to encourage the majority of Americans, who now sit out the elections, to participate in the electoral process. Restricting political money and speech will only further hamper competition and discourage citizens from voting.

THERE ARE HEROES IN OUR MIDST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago today, I had the opportunity to present the Medal of Jubilee of Liberty to those South Dakota men who were among those men who stormed, held and kept the beaches of Normandy 55 years ago. From June 6, 1944 until August 31, 1944 these men fought in one of the most historic and pivotal military engagements in American and European history.

Winston Churchill called D-Day the greatest thing that we have ever attempted. Viewed with the benefit of 55 years of history, historians rank the invasion of Normandy as one of the greatest military actions ever on par with the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. that marked the beginning of the Roman Empire, and with the English defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. It is considered one of the half dozen greatest battles in human history.

I asked someone from my staff to call the men that we were going to be presenting medals to try and get more information about them and their involvement in the Normandy invasion so I could present it at the Memorial Day ceremony.

My staffer made several phone calls and talked to many of the men who were honored at that event but none of them really wanted to talk about their experience. They said that war is a horrible experience and they hoped that no one ever has to go through what they went through on the shores of Normandy.

They also said that really they did not do all that much. They said there were so many others who did so much more, so many buddies who never came home from those beaches. My staffer was amazed at their humility and their reticence.

Humility and reticence are two qualities in rare supply in America today. My staffer has been raised in the TV talk show America where people talk about everything that has ever happened to them all the time, all over the place, over and over again until everyone everywhere knows literally everything about them, and somehow this is considered healthy.

The men who fought in Normandy were raised in a different America. They were raised to do their duty, quietly, humbly, without question or rancor, and then come home again, marry the girl who waited for them, get a job, raise a family and live their lives.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk in America today about a lack of role models. We have shootings in our schools and people say it is because our young people have no one to look up to. They say that our young people have no heroes. If our young people have no heroes it is because we are looking for heroes in all the wrong places. We are looking for heroes among sports figures and on Hollywood sound stages and in the soldout amphitheaters of pop music concerts. We should be looking for the heroes who

sit across the kitchen table from us. We should be looking for our heroes in the men who read to us and raised us and taught us right from wrong.

The men who fought at Normandy are heroes. They may not be rich and they may not be famous and they would never claim that title for themselves but they are heroes in the truest sense of the word. Many of their friends never came home. Nine thousand men lost their lives in the invasion; 2,500 at Omaha Beach alone; another 2,500 among the American Airborne division; 1,100 Canadians and 3,000 British.

But by the evening of June 6, 1944, Allied power had prevailed all across the Normandy beachhead. More than 100,000 men had come ashore, the first of millions more who would follow.

It is hard to describe horror to those who have never been there. It is hard for those of us who have never been in battle to imagine smoke and death and screaming tracers and the roar of cannon fire. We cannot imagine the horrors that these men have witnessed. We can only see the outcome.

These are the men who freed a continent. These are the men who won a war. These men knew that some things are worth dying for; that democracy is worth dying for; that America is worth dying for. They believed that someone had to stop Hitler. They did it because they had orders to do so. They did it because it was their job.

Webster defines a hero as, quote, a man admired for his achievements or qualities; one that shows great courage, unquote.

These men, the men of the summer of 1944, stormed and secured a beachhead. These men toppled a regime. These men rushed in to save democracy at that crucial moment in history when someone almost succeeded in taking it away. These men are heroes, though they will not admit it.

So the next time, America, that you think your kids do not have any role models and there is no one left to look up to, turn off the TV and look across the kitchen table at your father, your grandfather or your great grandfather and ask them about the war. Ask them what they did. Hear their stories. There are heroes walking in our midst. We need to open our eyes and see them before us and thank them for their courage.

It is my great privilege and honor to be able to recognize those men from my home State of South Dakota who served our country so nobly and so bravely in the summer of 1944 and helped secure the freedom that we enjoy in America today and hope that we will be able to pass it on to the next generation.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROW-

LEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure I will use all the 60 minutes but we will give it our best.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss the issue of school modernization and construction. I have led the freshman class in fighting for school construction. This past winter we hosted a series of one minutes and a special order like this evening for freshmen to talk about the conditions of our schools in our districts.

Recently, I hosted an education roundtable in my district on this very topic, with our very special guest assistant secretary for education Scott Fleming, and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) to whom I am very grateful for her work in the area of school construction and modernization.

I intend to continue my fight to bring school construction legislation to this floor this year, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, the freshman class sent a letter to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) asking for school construction to be brought up this year. We had Secretary Riley endorsing our request. We had the Democratic leadership and many members of the education community on our side. We are asking for a broad bipartisan support this evening for school modernization and construction.

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Our schools need our help. We need an effective and comprehensive school modernization package that is a Federal, State, and local partnership—a Federal, State and local partnership.

Schools, as part of our Nation's infrastructure, are in desperate need of repair and modernization. If these were our Nation's highways that I was talking about, we probably would not be having this discussion this evening. Well, Mr. Speaker, our schools are our educational highways.

Let me just give my colleagues some examples of some of the problems I am experiencing in my district, and I am sure many of my colleagues around the country are experiencing similar difficulties. Enrollment in the County of Queens in New York City is increasing by 30,000, 30,000 enrollments every 5 years. In 1999, the enrollment is 270,850 students. In the year 2004, that number will rise to 300,000. By year 2007, it is estimated that Queens County will have over 330,000 new students.

In the 7th Congressional District, I represent the most overcrowded school district in the City of New York. School District 24 is operating at over 119 percent of capacity. I have three of the top 10 most overcrowded school districts in the City of New York, District 24, District 30, and District 11 in the Bronx operating at 119, 109 and 107 percent respectively.

By 2007, three of the five most overcrowded schools and school districts will be in the 7th Congressional District, my district. Nearly every school